

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3640

To require the Commissioner of Labor Statistics to develop a methodology for measuring the cost of living in each State, and to require the Comptroller General to determine how certain Federal benefits would be increased if the determination of those benefits were based on that methodology.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 21, 2003

Mr. TIERNEY (for himself, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Mr. ACEVEDO-VILÁ, Mr. OLVER, Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD, Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. OWENS, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, and Ms. WOOLSEY) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, Financial Services, and Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To require the Commissioner of Labor Statistics to develop a methodology for measuring the cost of living in each State, and to require the Comptroller General to determine how certain Federal benefits would be increased if the determination of those benefits were based on that methodology.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Cost of Living Meas-
3 urement and Index Act of 2003”.

4 **SEC. 2. COST OF LIVING METHODOLOGY.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Commissioner of Labor Sta-
6 tistics shall develop a methodology for determining the
7 cost of living in each State, which accounts for the costs
8 of housing, goods, and services.

9 (b) ELEMENTS OF METHODOLOGY.—The method-
10 ology developed under this section shall include indices for
11 measuring the cost of living in a State.

12 (c) REPORT.—Not later than 6 months after the date
13 of enactment of this Act, the Commissioner of Labor Sta-
14 tistics shall transmit to the Congress and the Comptroller
15 General a report that contains the methodology developed
16 under this section.

17 **SEC. 3. STUDY BY COMPTROLLER GENERAL.**

18 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Comptroller General shall
19 conduct a study in which the methodology developed under
20 section 2 is applied to determine how Federal benefits pro-
21 vided to beneficiaries in each State under the programs
22 described in subsection (b) would be distributed if—

23 (1) the cost of living in each State, as deter-
24 mined under the methodology, were a factor in the
25 determination of such benefits; and

1 (2) the methodology were applied so that Fed-
2 eral benefits vary only to the extent that such deter-
3 mination would result in an increase of benefits to
4 beneficiaries in a State.

5 (b) INCLUDED FEDERAL BENEFIT PROGRAMS.—The
6 study under subsection (a) shall include determination of
7 increases in benefits provided under the following:

8 (1) The Elementary and Secondary Education
9 Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.).

10 (2) Section 32 of the Internal Revenue Code of
11 1986, relating to the earned income tax credit.

12 (3) All Federal housing assistance programs.

13 (4) The Temporary Assistance to Needy Fami-
14 lies Program.

15 (5) The Food Stamp Program.

16 (6) All other Federal nutrition assistance pro-
17 grams, but only to the extent that they provide
18 vouchers, coupons, cash grants, or cash reimburse-
19 ments.

20 (c) REPORT.—Not later than 6 months after the date
21 of receipt of the report from the Commissioner of Labor
22 Statistics under section 2(c), the Comptroller General
23 shall transmit a report to the Congress that contains the
24 following:

1 (1) The results of the study conducted under
2 subsection (a).

3 (2) A description of the increases in benefits de-
4 termined under subsection (b).

5 (3) A description of any additional data that
6 should be obtained and considered to confirm or im-
7 prove those results and determinations.

8 (4) Recommendations for any changes in the
9 methodology developed under section 2 that would
10 ensure more accurate determination of the cost of
11 living in a State, including any appropriate changes
12 in the indices that should be used to measure such
13 cost.

14 (5) An estimate of the costs to the Federal
15 Government of using the methodology developed
16 under section 2 to determine Federal benefits under
17 the programs referred to in subsection (b) of this
18 section, including any change in such costs that
19 would result from implementing the recommenda-
20 tions made under paragraph (4) of this subsection.

21 (6) Recommendations for any changes in law
22 that are necessary or appropriate to ensure that the
23 cost of living in a State, as determined under the
24 methodology developed in section 2, is a factor in
25 the determination of Federal benefits provided to

1 beneficiaries in that State under the programs de-
2 scribed in subsection (b), but only to the extent that
3 such determination would result in an increase of
4 benefits to beneficiaries in a State.

5 **SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

6 For the purpose of carrying out this Act, there are
7 authorized to be appropriated to the Commissioner of
8 Labor Statistics \$1,000,000 for fiscal year 2004.

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